THE MINISTER OF *91 MM* IN JHE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUP-PLIES (SHRI RAM FUJAN PAT EL): (a) and (b) The pricing of the commodities by and large is determined by those involved in production and trading. The Packaged Commodities Rules *inter alia,* seek to protect the consumer from arbitrary charging of prices by the retailers. Fixation of prices of profit margins for manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers is outside the scope of the Standards of Weights and Measures Act and the rules thereunder.

Raids on boarders

2053. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: WiH the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has re-cently declared to come down heavily on hoarders to bring down the prices of essential commodities;

(b) if so, the number of raids conducted on hoarders during the months of June, July and August, 1990 in the Capital and other parts of the country;

(c) the details of tbf iaids conducted and whether it has any impact on the decline in the prices of essential commodities; and

(d) if not, what other measure Government propose to adopt in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUP-PLIES (SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) According to the information received from 21 States/UTs including Delhi, 4189 raids werj conducted and goods worth about Rs. 80. 6 lakhs confiscated in June, 1990 in the country. Uplo date information for all States/UTs is not yet available.

Government has accorded highest priority to check the rising trend in prices of essential commodities. Both long term and short term measures are being taken for the purpose. The measures taken by the Government broadly include steps to increase the production of essential commodities, effective procurement and- buffet stocking oprerations of foodgrains streng -thening of Public Distribution System, > strict enforcement of the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act and Cither re-gulatory measures; and augmenting domestic supplies through imports (e. g. edible oils) subject to over-all constraints of foreign exchanges resources.

Release of edible oil stock by NDDB

2054. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have asked the NDDB to release tlwir edible oils stocks in consultation with the State Govern- > ments to check the spwt in prices; and

(b) if so, what are the other directives issued by Government to the NDDB?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI N1TJSH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Under the Integrated Policy on Edible oil/Oilseeds, National Dairy Development Board has been appointed as market intervention agency with full functional autonomy to undertake market intervention activities such as timely purchase and sate of edible oils and oilseeds to achieve the objective of the Integrated Policy. NDDB has been in touch with the State Governments whenever deemed necessary.

Increase in the availability of tea, kerosene and cement

2055. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUP PLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to increase the availability of essential items like tea, kirosene end cement; and

(b) what measures are being considered in that regard?

[Shrimati Jayanthi Natarajan]

Sati Act. It is such a pernicious practice. In fact, it is-not even a practice. It is going back to the stone ages. It is uncivilised and barbaric to think that a women should go... ('Interruptions). I am sure every single Member of this House will agree with me that it is a shame and a slur on the civilised society and India that today we are even talking about something like 'Sati' in India. We should not even be talking about it. In these circumstances, the Abolition of Sati Act was passed by the Congress Government and according to that, even the glorification of 'Sati' which means 'the observance of any ceremony or supporting justifying or propagating the pratice of Sati in any manner'—this is on the A'ct— is an offence and it is punishable with imprisonment. Secondly, if anybody is convicted under the Act, he or sne should immediately be disqualified from the Membership of Parliament. We have amended the Representation of the People Act to that effect. This is section 8-A of the Representation of the People Act.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please be brief because we are not discussing 'Sati' as n°w.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATRA-JAN; Only one more second, Madam. I do not want to take the time of the House. We have amended the Representation of the People Act to the effect that if any Member is convicted of an offence under the Sati Act, he should be immediately disqualified and cannot stand for another election. In these circumstances, a senior Vice-President of the BJP has publicly supported 'sati' and yesterday, she has gone on record in the other House, I am not referring to those proceedings.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No mention of the other House or the proceeding^ of the other House.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHi; NATARA-JAN. She has publicly reiterated her stand on 'sati'. If this Government is really serious, it is not enough to say so. To say, T am against voluntary 'sati' but if a woman wants to go and commit suicide or die on her husband's pyre, it is Hindu religion' still amounts to glorifying 'sati'. Therefore, I demand that the Central Government should immediately prosecute the person concerned, take action, against her and see that she is disqualified. Otherwise, nobody is serious about 'Sati'.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri Atalji. (Interruptions). We are not discussing 'sati'. There is no discussion. There is no question of party representation of it. We all know everybody's view. I am only allowing him because the Member belongs to that party.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी (मध्य प्रदेश) : महोदया,...

कुछ माननीय सदस्य : ये क्यों बोल रहे हैं ?...(व्यवधान)

उपसभापति : क्योंकि बी० जे० पी० के वाइस प्रेसिडेंट का नाम लिया गया है... (व्यवधान)

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी अगर मेरी पार्टी का नाम न लिया जाता तो मैं खड़ा न होता...

उपसभापति : मैंने इसीलिए आपको ऐलाउ किया...

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : इसीलिए मैं खड़ा हुआ ...(व्यवधान)

उपसभापति : आप बात तो करने दीजिए उनको बोलने दीजिए, अपनी बात कहने दीजिए...